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I'm one of those guys who loves working ADHD into a conversation. I love sharing what I know because I know a lot about ADHD.

The other motivation is to inform the public, which is mainly unaware of ADHD and how it affects people's lives. Sometimes, those people live under the same roof as them.

And they have no idea what struggles that family members are going through. Some of those people are still actively contributing to their family's suffering. ' suffering.

Every once in a while, I meet someone who has ADHD and has no idea that they have it. Of course, I'm not a doctor, so I'd never go about diagnosing people.

But I would encourage them to get a diagnosis.

Getting my diagnosis was both empowering and life-changing.

If I find someone who gives off the telltale ADHD vibe...

I might ask, “Do you lose things a lot?”

Or, “Hey, do you have trouble forgetting people’s names?”

Those are some strong indicators.

If you go through the various criteria, you can more or less get a sense.

But either way, I feel a special attachment to those who go about their lives blissfully unaware that life could be so much better.

People fail to understand what ADHD costs.

But since ADHD is my lived experience, I’m all too aware.

Some costs have been accruing since the day an ADHDer is born, whether they get diagnosed or not.

So, for example, 50% of people with ADHD also have dyslexia. I’m one such person.

That means I can’t process words like most people, and my brain also doesn’t feel like doing it most days.

A double whammy.

I can recall taking 2 or 3 times as long to read as my peers in high school.

I was a smart kid, but it was time for English class, and I gave myself concessions.

I knew I wasn’t going to get my highest score.

I knew keeping up would be a struggle.

I knew I'd have to work my ass off if I wanted to keep my average up.

Working my ass off was a coping skill that I learned early on when dealing with my undiagnosed ADHD.

However, working hard can have its limits and drawbacks.

And there are often much better ways to approach a problem than sheer willpower.

What's more...

Some people want good grades AND a social life.

There were many times when I had to choose between one and the other.

As an adult today...

My sheer willpower and determination are much more pronounced than many others. And that's definitely because I knew that if I wanted to hack it in life, I would not have the luxury of dicking around.

I was also so lucky because I happened to wind up in an incredible environment that would support my development as a teenager.

That environment gave me structure, routines, and habits that would help me succeed in life despite my ADHD.

I remember hearing my friend talk about his ADHD in high school. As he described the symptoms, I resonated so strongly that I called my mom and told her I thought I had ADHD. I was about 16 at the time. I told her that's probably why I have so much trouble with reading.

I went as far as going to the school nurse to try to get a diagnosis.

However, for some reason, the nurse returned and told me the evaluation would be 8 hours long. I'm unsure why she said that because that sounds absurd today. But I was a busy kid with many challenging classes and

extracurriculars. That much time didn't sound like an amount I could afford to spare.

Disheartened. I gave up on the idea of getting diagnosed.

And I wouldn't look into getting diagnosed for another 12 years.

That's 12 years of unnecessary suffering.

I have mixed feelings about getting diagnosed as late as I did in life.

I know how much pain it caused me.

I know how many times I've screwed up or dropped the ball when someone else wouldn't have. (Or I tell myself I do...) I know how easy it is to avoid intellectually stimulating things and become a shallow person who is addicted to instant gratification because my ADHD makes it harder to engage with dense material, so I still do the easy stuff like vapid TV shows or even cartoons...

Not only that, I have poor self-control, so I keep doing the unhealthy, unwise, candy-coated, calorie-storing thing that ultimately makes life better in the moment but worse later.

ADHD is such a complicated problem for those who have it.

It causes deep wounds in your self-esteem, significantly if you don't grow up in an ideal family or you don't have access to therapy.

Imagine knowing you're less competent than you should be....

From an early age, everyone else can tie their shoelaces with ease.

Or read their storybooks without stuttering.

Or catch a ball with perfect hand-eye coordination.

When your capabilities are different from your peers, you can see it. They can see it. Your teachers, [parents](#), and other adult figures may point it out and make you feel even worse about yourself.

You may ask yourself why you can't quite get anything right.

You may feel like you're secretly incompetent...

Because there's an unexplained reason why you can't do what others can.

It's a tough place to come from.

And the number of reference experiences you get telling you you're incompetent can add up over time.

I like to tell people that the average ADHDee receives 20,000 more criticisms than their peers by age 12.

Until next time,

Anton

Dancer, Writer, Buddhist

P.S. If this resonates, forward it to someone who needs to read it.

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